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Duty

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Duty

By Daniel Carlson

Crushing rain throws itself at him
Whirling gales rise over his head
Covering old eyes with a cupped hand
He searches the shadows, straining,
Struggling to locate a child's shape
He shines his torch to tree roots
Trudging over mud and newborn rivers
Light reflects off red cotton cloth
And he bends down over her form
Soaking and slick and sickly white skin
Hair pasted flat against her head
He heaves her over his shoulder
And turns back, out of the basin
Pale lights bounce further along
A frantic father rushes forward
Rips his child from the man who
Politely ignores his tears
Overridden with the rain